SEPTEMBER TECHNOLOGY PLANNING TIP

Time to get the technology planning committee together? Getting off to a good start will make committee members feel their work is useful and significant. How can you make these meetings productive and beneficial considering the busy pace the beginning of school brings about?

Be prepared to make the initial planning meeting thought provoking and relevant. Take some time before the meeting to map out your timeline and develop a schedule of meetings. Collect and review resources that discuss upcoming topics or activities and share them with the committee, either through handouts or a Moodle or other type of web site to post readings, questions and assignments. Of course, have copies of the current plan, as well as information on where to go for school data and information available to assist the members in their work. During the meeting, be clear about the duties and the expected due dates. But, more importantly, be prepared to talk about the use and benefit of a technology plan, and talk about the vision your district has for technology in the classroom. After the meeting, be prepared to schedule 1-1 meetings for new members or those with questions. Stay in touch via email and/or phone calls.

The Instructional Technology section of DESE has developed a site with a variety of resources to help you develop your technology plan. Visit http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/instrtech/techplan/gettingstarted.htm#Technology%20Planning%20Resources for more information.

OCTOBER TECHNOLOGY PLANNING TIP

In chapter 2 of *Planning into Practice: Resources for Planning, Implementing, and Integrating Instructional Technology*, the SouthEast Initiatives Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SEIR-TEC) compares building a useable and comprehensive technology plan to building a house. While most people use a general floor plan to start the discussion of building a home, the final drawings have considered many things including family needs and desires, budget, building resources, site needs, etc. The primary function of a home design team is to identify these individual needs and address them in the final plan. See: http://www.seirtec.org/plan/Ch%202.pdf.

The technology committee is the design team for the “technology house” being built by your school district. The committee must discover the needs and desires, budget, etc. before they create the final plan for the district. The team must plan for staff and students in the district to be comfortable in the present yet prepared for future growth and changes in the technology house. Needs surveys, assessments, timelines, budgets and support are all necessary to make sure the inhabitants of your technology house are comfortable and productive.

For more information, check out the SEIR-TEC guide at http://www.seirtec.org/techplan.html

NOVEMBER TECHNOLOGY PLANNING TIP

DECEMBER TECHNOLOGY PLANNING TIP

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) publication *Technology @ Your Fingertips: A Guide to Implementing Technology Solutions for Education Agencies and Institutions* has chapters entitled:

- **Knowing What You Need**
- **Knowing What you Have**
- **Knowing What to Get**

The answers to these three components are the basic platform for an effective technology plan.

Knowing What You Need: The data you gather…test scores, performance data, standings in state assessments… will point to areas your district needs to improve. It can indicate the need to increase reading scores in the third grade, or to increase social studies performance in seventh grade.

Knowing What You Have: Just as you study student performance data, you should study the inventory of your technology. This is more than counting boxes and wires; it also involves connectivity and the users' abilities, access, and knowledge. Use the data to make plans…perhaps the new reading series has an online individualized assessment for each student, but teachers cannot use it due to lack of connection. You have become aware of a new program that allows students to collaborate with a group in another country or state. Do your classrooms have the technology necessary for that collaboration? What about the teachers – are they prepared to implement these programs? Do they need professional development?

Knowing What To Get: By taking a sharp look at what you need and what you have, your committee can develop a plan to raise the identified reading scores or social studies scores. They can plan a natural progression of funding and professional development that supports the implementation of the projects, and set target dates for it's implementation and chart the progress.

Source: The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) publication *Technology @ Your Fingertips: A Guide to Implementing Technology Solutions for Education Agencies and Institutions* can be found at http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=98293rev

JANUARY TECHNOLOGY PLANNING TIP

Every person who has been a teenager or a parent has probably had the "car" talk. It goes something like this.

> Teenager: "I want to buy a car – I have the money saved."
>
> Parent: "What about insurance…and gas…and upkeep?"
>
> Teenager: "I'll worry about that later – I have enough to buy the car…"

Sound familiar? Every responsible parent will make sure the teenager knows the full list of expenditures purchasing a car will entail.

As adults why don't we ask the same questions when buying a **computer**, or implementing a **new grade book** program, or purchasing new **printers**?

Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) can help technology programs plan for the future no matter the size of school. The future that happens tomorrow and the future that happens three years from now must be considered in TCO. By investigating TCO, districts can budget for "standing" or "fixed" costs, and can estimate what a purchase will actually cost the district during its lifetime. Consider the following examples:

- Ten **new computers** for the library will speed up research – what will it do to your electrical system?
- Considering the time needed to train staff on the **new grade book** program may make a difference in purchasing. A more expensive program may be cheaper in the long run if it is more user friendly or intuitive, or if the purchase price includes with a free training program for the staff.
- A new **printer** costing less initially but that uses expensive or hard to locate ink supplies may not be the best purchase. It will not be cost effective and can quickly send your ink budget into the red.

To find out more about TCO, and to see how your district can make the right decisions for the future, check out http://www.classroomtco.org/tco_chart.html.

FEBRUARY TECHNOLOGY PLANNING TIP

DISSEMINATION, MONITORING, EVALUATION

Could you build a home without seeing the plans? Would you ask a builder to build something he had not seen the plans for? Would you build a home without visiting the site and asking questions as the structure progressed? Would you build a home without consulting family members about the space they would be living in?

Dissemination, monitoring, and evaluation are vital parts of any plan, be it for building a home or building an education system. Sharing the district technology plan with the teachers, staff and community members can generate enthusiasm and a sense of ownership that helps drive the plan forward and allows all staff to participate in the district's growth. Monitoring a plan means identifying parts of the plan meant to show movement, and checking if that movement is happening. Evaluation can create an open atmosphere that allows for sharing and understanding, and can deflect expensive and costly mistakes.

Sometimes district technology plans do not include the dissemination, monitoring, and evaluation plan. Would you trust a builder who did not share the plans with you?

For more information on the Dissemination, Monitoring and Evaluation, check out Technology @ Your Fingertips: A Guide to Implementing Technology Solutions for Education Agencies and Institutions.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 1998 & 2001.

Chapter 7:Knowing How to Support and Maintain Your Technology Solution , Basic Principles of Technology Planning.

North Central Regional Technology in Education (NCRTEC) Consortium, North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL).

Evaluating the Implementation of Your Technology Plan

Other resources are located at http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/instrtech/techplan/gettingstarted.htm

MARCH TECHNOLOGY PLANNING TIP

Evaluation is typically one of the weak areas found in district long-range technology plans. While it's relatively easy to take inventories, conduct surveys, and look at summative data such as test scores, few plans really conduct formative assessment to evaluate how well implementation of the technology plan is coming along. The Capacity for Applying Project Evaluation (CAPE) is a suite of free resources, tools, and professional development activities designed to help project managers collect and use data to make decisions to improve technology project implementation and impact – formative evaluation to monitor and adjust projects to the ultimate benefit of students. The CAPE evaluation framework was created by the Technology in Learning group in the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to help recipients of NCLB Title II.D grants evaluate their projects, but can easily be adapted for the evaluation of other grants and school improvement efforts. Resources include the framework, data collection resources, and professional development model for using the framework. The CAPE Professional Development model is based on national standards and best practices of professional development for educators (National Staff Development Council, 2001) and is consistent with the guidelines of the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (2006). See: http://www.serve.org/Evaluation/Capacity.